The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Actor Killed in Traffic Accident That Paralyzes Moscow

By Natalya Krainova

August 17, 2011



At least four people died and a large swathe of central Moscow was paralyzed for hours Wednesday after a car driven by a young movie star on the way to his birthday party crashed and burned on the Garden Ring in the early morning.

Speculation swirled that the car had "privileged" license plates and belonged to a senior official. Police added to the rumors by classifying footage from surveillance cameras as secret, one news report said.

A Mercedes driven by Nikita Yemshanov, who turned 28 on Wednesday, struck a Hyundai and a Nissan and then rammed into a lamp post, bursting into flames on impact, on Sadovaya-Sukharevskaya Ulitsa around 6:30 a.m., Lifenews.ru said.

Yemshanov apparently lost control of the car while trying to overtake the Nissan, Lifenews.ru said, citing a law enforcement source. The impact with the Nissan knocked the Mercedes

into the oncoming lane, where it collided with the Hyundai head on.

Yemshanov and two others died on the spot, while four other people, including passengers in his car and the Hyundai, were hospitalized, Interfax said, citing city police.

Yemshanov's girlfriend, Yekaterina Biryukova, 24, died several hours later in the hospital, RIA-Novosti said, adding that she could only be identified by her tattoos.

Interfax, citing a medical source, said a fifth person also died in the hospital, but the report could not be confirmed. Itar-Tass said a child was among the dead.

Interfax said the Mercedes had license plates in the series "AMR 97," which is usually reserved for state officials, a group of motorists notorious for their disdain of traffic rules.

Photos from the crash site showed the Mercedes without license plates. However, another source told Interfax that the car simply had transit license plates, which are made of cardboard and burned up in the crash.

Footage from street cameras on the nearby Sukharevskaya Ploshchad, normally available for traffic police on duty, was "blocked," a traffic police source told Russian News Service radio.

Traffic police had to close off a portion of the Garden Ring to traffic after the incident, which within minutes caused traffic jams stretching for many kilometers.

Tens of thousands of motorists were stuck in the traffic jams, which did not clear up until past 2 p.m., NTV television reported.

St. Petersburg-born Yemshanov debuted as a supporting cast member in the 2004 war film "72 Meters" and has starred in more than 30 movies since. His breakthrough was when he played the lead in the mystical horror film "Dead Daughters," which was critically received on its release in 2007.

He was also prominent on the city's theater scene, performing at Teatr.doc and the School of Modern Drama, among other venues.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/08/17/actor-killed-in-traffic-accident-that-paralyzes-moscow-a8971